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Date JUL 13 1976

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: April 7, 1976

SUBJECT: Secretary's Meeting with Sudanese Ambassador Deng

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: April 7, 1976; 12:00 noon, Secretary's office

PARTICIPANTS: SUDAN

Ambassador to the United States Francis M. Deng

US

The Secretary

Acting Assistant Secretary Talcott Seelye

Wendell B. Coote (notetaker)

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Reviewed by: *Hein*
Date: 9/21/78

Ambassador Deng: I appreciate this opportunity to see you, Mr. Secretary. I will not be staying on in my present assignment as long as I would have liked.

The Secretary: How long have you been here?

Ambassador Deng: A little over one year.

The Secretary: You are going to a very responsible position. Congratulations!

Ambassador Deng: Yes, there will be new challenges. I came here with a challenge too. I had hoped it would be completed before I left but regrettably this is not the case. My meeting with you today is a fine way to crown my tour here.

I would like to contrast my two last missions. I was in Scandinavia before coming here. I arrived in Scandinavia shortly after the civil war in Sudan was settled. Scandinavia had been very concerned about the division between the Africans and the Arabs in Sudan. The U.S. was also among the first countries to be involved in this reconstruction and relief. Then, unfortunately, the terrible incident in Khartoum occurred which understandably had an adverse effect on the role which the U.S. was playing in Sudan.

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The Secretary: It has been a difficult period. Our Foreign Service officers take a dim view of being the subject of kidnapping and murder. Some members of the Service are taking a very hard line.

Ambassador Deng: You must realize that this happened some time ago. I hope we are beyond the quarrel stage.

The Secretary: We have no quarrel with Sudan.

Ambassador Deng: Sudan can play a positive role in the area. It is a bridge between the Middle East and Africa as well as a microcosm of Africa. Settlement of our internal problem has opened new pages for Sudan and made it possible for Sudan to play a more relevant role. Uniting people supposedly ununitable is a concrete demonstration that Sudan is a country which understands moderation. It can therefore influence things in the region on the basis of principles which both we and you share.

The real issue between Sudan and the U.S. is not material factors but political cooperation and friendship in working together to find solutions to problems of mutual concern. When I was in Khartoum recently, I talked to both the Vice President and the President. The Vice President emphasized that what we want from the U.S. is not material expression but to go back to the friendship we have known for such a long time. President Nimeiri reviewed Sudan's relations with a number of countries, including the Soviet Union and Germany, and concluded very positively in favor of the U.S. on the basis of the principles and qualities of the American people and their philosophy of life. We can understand the position which the U.S. has taken toward Sudan, but we fear there comes a point in terms of timing when the balance becomes detrimental to this relationship.

The Secretary: We have no national disagreements with Sudan. We work together closely and cooperatively; nevertheless, we have a legacy of the assassination of two of our diplomats and then the release of the assassins and we cannot take these things lightly. In principle, I agree with everything you have said. Why don't we take another look at the situation and see what is involved in returning to fully normal relations?

What is involved?

Ambassador Seelye: We have resumed some economic assistance, but what concerns the Sudanese is that they do not feel that we give them the same full consideration as we do other friendly countries and that relations have not been fully normalized yet.

The Secretary: We appreciate what you have done regarding the release of the captives in Eritrea. Relations are good on the political level too. We have no complaint about what the Sudan is doing. If it were not for the events in 1973 there would be no

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problem at all.

Please convey to your President and Vice President on the one hand that we cannot agree that American diplomats can be murdered and there can be no penalties, and on the other hand I agree with everything you have said regarding our relations. The question is at what point do we go beyond where we are now, unless AF feels there are other reasons why we should not do so.

Ambassador Seelye: We have no quarrels with Sudan, but are pleased with our relations.

Ambassador Deng: I appreciate your comments very much.

The Secretary: We will take another look at what ought to be done, particularly if it is not too demonstrative.

Ambassador Deng: Such as a visit by the Secretary?

The Secretary: I can't visit Sudan on this trip, but it is not because of any quarrels. My staff is killing me as it is. In principle Khartoum is not all that far away. I go to Europe occasionally. Perhaps I can stop in Sudan on one of my trips to Europe.

I understand your President is coming to the United States on a private visit.

Ambassador Deng: I would like to comment briefly on what you have said. I was in Sudan when the assassination occurred. The reaction of President Nimeiri and the whole country was very strong indeed not only against the murders but against the abuse of Sudanese hospitality. The Sudanese went out of their way during the trial to assure justice. For reasons better known to the President, but certainly because of his concern about the security of the country, the assassins were permitted to leave Sudan after the sentencing. However, the assassins were not released, but were sent to Egypt to serve their sentences. We don't think that the balance against us is so bad.

With regard to President Nimeiri's visit, he would like to visit this country some time soon, perhaps in June, both as a demonstration of his good will and to look into the potential economic and other cooperation that might come from private interests in the United States.

The Secretary: The President has a very heavy schedule of bicentennial visitors around that time. However, this would be a private

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visit not requiring much ceremony and involving perhaps an hour's meeting with the President. I am sympathetic to the visit and will discuss it with the President in terms of his schedule.

I wish you lots of luck in your new assignment.

Ambassador Deng: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

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